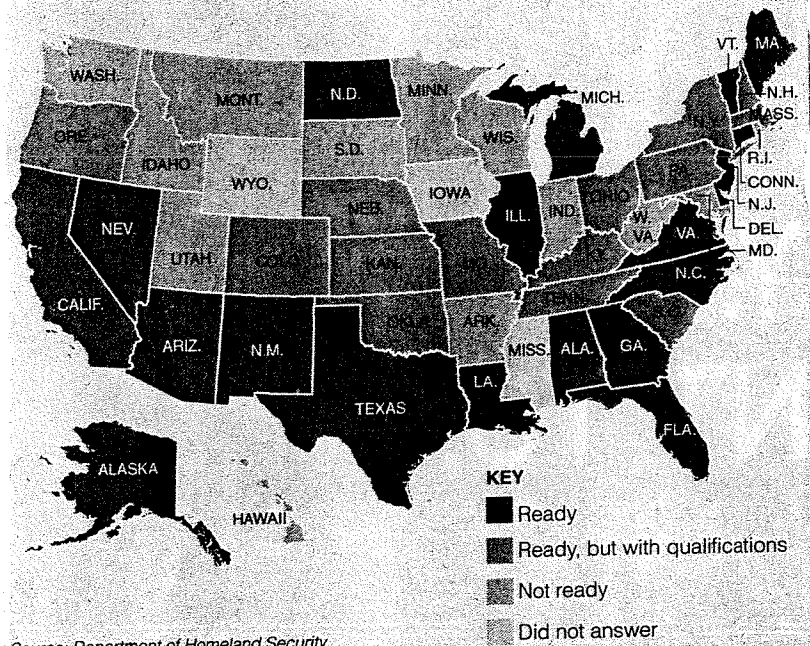


Ready or Not

Results of a survey by the Department of Homeland Security on the readiness of states to manage a catastrophic event.



Source: Department of Homeland Security

The New York Times

Many States Are Not Confident In Disaster Plans, Survey Finds

By ERIC LIPTON

WASHINGTON, Feb. 12 — At least a quarter of the nation's state governments are not confident that their basic plan to respond to a catastrophic event is adequate, a survey by the Department of Homeland Security has found, and an even greater number say they lack confidence in their mass evacuation plans.

The self-assessments were compiled in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina for a report that will be submitted to Congress, following up on a promise made by President Bush that his administration would work to ensure that the nation responded better to the next major emergency.

Each state and 75 of the nation's largest urban areas were asked whether they were confident that their basic plan was adequate to manage catastrophic events.

Thirteen states said no. New Jersey and Connecticut said yes, while New York responded with a "qualified yes."

The number of "no" responses rose to 21 when the states were asked if they were confident in their evacuation plans for a catastrophe. And that rose to 52 percent of the states and territories when the question focused on confidence in handling mass casualties.

Results from the urban areas mirrored those of the states: 29 percent said no on their basic response plans, 44 percent said no on their evacua-

After Katrina, the federal government asks state officials about preparedness.

tion plans and 40 percent said no on mass casualties.

The self-evaluations are the first step in an effort to improve preparedness, the report said. The department is sending teams to each of the cities and states to confirm the self-evaluations and propose steps to fix any shortcomings.

"We must have effective plans that detail how leaders and organizations will synchronize intergovernmental efforts to deal with the problems generated by catastrophic events," said a copy of the report, which was obtained by The New York Times from a department official.

Senator Susan Collins, a Maine Republican and chairwoman of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, said that although the assessment was an important first step, the results so far were not that insightful.

"Unless you are measuring against something, I am not sure that that kind of self-assessment tells you much," Ms. Collins said.